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STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

THE ROLE OF ARMY CHAPLAINS IN HUMANITARIAN RELIEF OPERATIONS

BY

CHAPLAIN (LTC) ANDREW J. BULLARD, III
United States Army

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by

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ABSTRACT

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If current trends continue the deployment of military chaplains in humanitarian relief operations will increase. The National Security Strategy (NSS) and the National Military Strategy (NMS) require the Army to be a strategically responsive force. Army chaplains must be prepared to provide religious support to the total force of soldiers and civilians who are involved in humanitarian relief efforts.

One important issue in humanitarian relief operations is the free exercise of religion. Current interpretations of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution prohibit Army Chaplains from providing ministry to individuals outside of the Army once deployed. Current policy must allow Army chaplains the freedom and flexibility to perform their ministerial duties even beyond the confines of the Army.

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THE ROLE OF ARMY CHAPLAINS IN HUMANITARIAN RELIEF OPERATIONS

"Soldiers on point for the Nation...Persuasive in Peace, Invincible in War".

—General Eric K. Shinseki The Army's Vision

The Army's Vision considers future missions in regards to the total force and its relationship to its sister services. "The spectrum of 21st century operations demands land forces in joint, multinational, and interagency formations for a variety of missions extending from humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to peacekeeping, peace enforcement, and winning major theater wars — our non-negotiable contract with the American people." A clear understanding of the Army's Vision will enable the Army to remain focused as it prepares to meet the future challenges of the 21st century.

As the Army prepares for future missions, it must consider the importance of Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW) and the essence of humanitarian relief operations. The Army must always be prepared to fight its nation's wars and still be prepared to meet the challenges of humanitarian relief operations.

Humanitarian relief operations have broad applications. "Humanitarian assistance can be defined as humanitarian aid using military assets in generally permissive environments to reduce conditions that present a serious threat to life and property in natural or man-made disasters." According to FM 100-5, "Humanitarian assistance operations use Department of Defense (DOD) personnel, equipment, and supplies to promote human welfare, to reduce pain and suffering, to prevent loss of life or destruction of property from the aftermath of natural manmade disasters." The Army has responded to humanitarian relief efforts in both CONUS and OCONUS. (For example, Hurricane Andrew, Somalia and Bosnia-Herzcovenia).

It is imperative that the Army stands ready to respond to any humanitarian relief operation regardless of location. The Army has vast resources to respond to national or international emergencies. The Army chaplain has proven to be a valuable asset in humanitarian relief operations. (For example, Army chaplains provided humanitarian assistance during the Korean War for orphans, for the homeless in Vietnam, and for refugees during Desert Comfort and Bosnia-Herzcovenia).

The Army chaplain can be instrumental to the success of any humanitarian relief operation. The Army chaplain is equipped to provide quality ministry across the spectrum from open conflict to MOOTW. Because of their unique perspective, Army chaplains provide an

added dimension to any Army task force. This is especially true in humanitarian relief operations.

Chaplains are by no means unfamiliar with ambiguity. Richard Niebubr says, "Entering the ministry is more like entering the Army, where one never knows where he will be called upon to perform." Humanitarian relief operations are replete with uncertainty. The Army chaplain performs all the traditional functions of the ministry: preaching, leading the worshiping community, and administering the sacraments, caring for souls, presiding over people. These traditional functions help relieve human suffering which is the goal of humanitarian relief operations.

THE ARMY CHIEF OF STAFF'S STRATEGIC VISION

General Shinseki, the 34th Chief of Staff of the United States Army, has ushered in a new vision for the Army through transformation, which will ensure the Army will remain a vital military force in the 21st century. He states that the goal of the Army's Vision is to ensure that the Army meets its Title 10 responsibilities while at the same time fulfilling the National Military Strategy's requirements. Transforming the Army into a full spectrum force is a demanding task and will require a complete effort of all soldiers, officers, enlisted and civilians. The goal of this full spectrum force will be the Objective Force capable of dominating at every point of the spectrum of operations. "This Objective Force will meet the challenges of the 21st century by providing the Nation with an Army that is more responsive, deployable, agile, versatile, lethal, survivable, and sustainable." This same force will continue to be involved in humanitarian relief operations, relieving human suffering and bringing stability to regional conflict.

General Shinseki's strategic vision has three components - people, readiness, and transformation. He states that the soldier is the centerpiece of Army's formations. The Army's primary mission and goal, according to General Shinseki, is to be about training soldiers and growing leaders. He goes on to say that leadership is the Army's stock-in-trade. He further states that the Army's investment should be directed to the well being of our soldiers, civilians, retirees, and their families.

General Shinseki also places emphasis on readiness. He understands that the Army cannot loose sight of the big picture, which is to fight and win its Nation's wars, as it moves toward the future.

In his farewell speech, Secretary of the Army Louis Caldera highlighted the enormous contribution that the Army has made to the country. The former Secretary of the Army understood the importance of the soldiers, civilians and families that makes up the total force.

As I end my tenure as Secretary of the Army, I want to tell you how enormously proud I am of the honorable and dedicated manner in which you serve our country every day. As I look back on my two - and - a - half years as secretary, what I will remember most is your selflessness and professionalism. Whatever our nation asked of you, you have always delivered more. Because of what you do, often under the most difficult of circumstances, America's Army is recognized around the world, as a land force without peer and a team of good-will ambassadors who represent the best the greatest nation on earth has to offer. There is no better testament of your abilities. 12

During a 10 January 2001 Pentagon press conference Secretary Caldera and other key officials announced the change in the Army slogan. The Army slogan "Be All You Can Be" was replaced with "An Army of One." Secretary Caldera stated that the change was needed due to the service's missing its recruiting mission three of the last five years. The Vice-Chief of Staff, General John M. Keane said the campaign "let's [sic.] recruits know we're speaking to self-image (and) values." He also stated that it reaffirms Army values and emphasizes personal development as part of a strong team. Adding, "It also sends a message to today's influences (parents, teachers, counselors, etc.)." The new slogan is a plea to possibly reach out to Generation X, ages 18 to 24, to make the Army a more robust force. Recruitment is an essential element of readiness. The United States must respond across the board with quality individuals to fill the ranks in order to continue to be the number one power and train its soldiers to standard.

The Chief of Staff and the former Secretary of the Army believe that the soldiers, civilians and families are an essential element that comprises the total force. The Army chaplain's primary mission is to provide quality ministry to soldiers, civilians and families to maintain the total force.

THE ARMY CHIEF OF CHAPLAIN'S VISION

The Army Chief of Chaplains, Chaplain (MG) Gaylord T. Gunhus, has tailored his vision to the vision of the Chief of Staff of the Army. The Chief of Chaplains stated: "Somewhere on freedom's frontier, or at any installation around the world, there is a soldier or family member who needs specialized ministry from a chaplain. The good news is that the U.S. Army Chaplain Corps is ready to respond with positive, life-changing ministry, from a specially trained chaplain." Chaplain Gunhus also stated that "today's chaplain is trained in a variety of specialized ministries especially ministry to displaced people from another country." The Chief of Chaplains is aware of the unique opportunities of providing ministry in humanitarian

relief operations. He is also convinced that today's Unit Ministry Team will be able to respond to any man-made or natural disaster that our Armed Forces may encounter.

Chaplain Gunhus is leading the Army chaplaincy in the right direction. Army chaplains are being trained to respond to a variety of missions, especially there involving human suffering. Army chaplains are trained in stress management, trauma ministry, prison ministry, or ministry to a displaced persons. Humanitarian relief operations will challenge Army chaplains. The Chief of Chaplains is moving the Army Chaplaincy to meet the new deployment demands. Providing quality ministry to disaster victims demands that chaplains are fully trained for the unique challenges that they will face. The Army chaplain's task is to communicate God's genuine love, concern and care to soldiers.

CURRENT INTERPRETATIONS OF THE FIRST AMENDMENT OF THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION

The traditional role of the Army chaplain is to support the free exercise of religion. FM 16-1 supports the free exercise of religion. Under the Constitution's provision for the "free exercise of religion," the ministry team (MT) provides religious support for all soldiers in the unit. ¹⁷

The free exercise of religion is ensured as chaplains provide religious support to soldiers, their family members, and authorized civilians. ¹⁸ Emphasis is on authorized civilians. Chaplains provide support according to the tenets of their faith group. If unable to provide support because of faith restrictions, chaplains seek the required support from other chaplain sources. ¹⁹

The chaplain's role in humanitarian relief operations was questioned for the first time during Joint Task Force Andrew. A controversial issue arose when a photograph of a chaplain and chaplain assistant praying with a disaster victim was printed in the Miami Herald. The Joint Task Force (JTF) Staff Judge Advocate General (SJA) also discovered Religious Support Teams were distributing Bibles and crosses to some of the disaster victims.

The JTF SJA issued a ruling that the Establishment Clause of the United States prohibited chaptains from providing direct religious support to victims in humanitarian relief operations.

The Establishment Clause in essence, does not allow governmental sponsorship of religion. The courts have generally determined that the activity is permissible if it has a secular purpose, its primary effect does not advance religion, and it does not create an excessive entanglement of government.²⁰

The JTF SJA concluded that:

The activity in question is not permissible because it is not secular in nature, and it does not represent or promote the advancement of religion by a governmental entity, and the mission of the chaplaincy was to engage in

activities designed to meet the religious need of a pluralistic military community. The chaplaincy failed to narrow its focus of ministry and consequently, such activity is constitutionally prohibited.²¹

The JTF SJA advised the JTF Chaplain that the failure of the chaplaincy to operate within the constitutional parameters could result in future judicial challenges to the chaplaincy. He also sensitized the JTF Chaplain of the chaplaincy's constitutional responsibility in providing ministry that meets the needs of a pluralistic military community, and not to the needs of a civilian community, even under the unique circumstances posed by JTF Andrew.

After the conclusion of JTF Andrew the JTF SJA raised the issue to the Department of the Army and to the Office of the Judge Advocate General (OJAG). A memorandum dated 23 November 1992 was also sent to the Chief of Chaplains, in which the Judge Advocate General agreed with the advice that was given to the JTF Chaplain. The OJAG strongly recommended that chaplains restrict their ministry to the military service members and to refrain from ministering to civilian disaster victims.

Chaplains associated with the humanitarian relief effort took issue with the entire JTF Andrew episode. Chaplains were not seeking to proselytize but only responding to people who sought them out for assistance. The JTF Andrew incident raises the issue of media attention in humanitarian relief operations.

But the media is not the enemy. The media is a reality in operations as evidenced by the command designating an escort for the media to observe training and to tell the Army story. ²²

Just as the command is trained to work closely with the media in such events, so future chaplain training could well include ways for chaplains to effectively relate to the media.

A telephonic interview was conducted on 7 March 2001 at 1400 hours between the researcher and Chaplain (Major) Jeff Houston, the chaplain whose photo was taken by the Miami Herald during JTF Andrew. Several questions were asked to determine, first hand, what happened from the chaplain's perspective and what guidance was provided to the chaplains while engaged in ministry to disaster victims. Chaplain Houston served as a Battalion Chaplain during Hurricane Andrew and a JTF Chaplain during Hurricane Mitch: two different perspectives.²³

Chaplain Houston stated that during JTF Andrew chaplains did not advertise religious services for disaster victims to attend, but they did not turn them away when they came to the services. He also stated that the same applied when a lady sought him out for prayer. He felt a need to pray with the lady and the Miami Herald took a photo. Only later during the deployment did it become an issue that involved the Staff Judge Advocate.²⁴

Chaplain Houston stressed the point that chain of command or senior chaplains provided no guidance or regulations to the chaplains during JTF Andrew as to how to interface with disaster victims. Chaplains relied on past ministerial skills and applied their professional judgment to the situation.²⁵

The question was asked about the difference in ministry to disaster victims from the JTF Chaplains perspective. Chaplain Houston stated that he had access to e-mail and DSN which provided him a way to request assistance from senior chaplains. He worked hard to provide ministry mainly to military soldiers and to utilize cautiously the chain of command when opportunities were presented to minister to disaster victims.²⁶

Chaplain Houston experienced one major problem prior to deploying to JTF Mitch: chaplains were not aware of the number of chaplains or denominational make up (Protestant, Catholic or Jewish) expected to deploy. He felt that knowing the numbers and faith groups of the chaplains could have been instrumental in planning religious coverage. Chaplain Houston noted that prior planning and coordination is essential in providing quality ministry to disaster victims in humanitarian relief operations. ²⁷

The controversy supports the new focus of the Chief of Chaplains vision for training chaplains in the issues associated with humanitarian relief operations. Specialized training in humanitarian relief operations will prevent Army chaplains from overstepping their charter during future humanitarian relief operations.

Disaster victims may seek out the chaplain for spiritual guidance or counseling. Chaplains, regardless of their faith, are trained to meet a variety of needs without forcing their own particular faith onto individuals. Chaplains trained in issues related to humanitarian relief operations will provide disaster victims the necessary assistance without violating constitutional restrictions or legalities.

PAST ROLES OF THE ARMY CHAPLAINS PROVIDING MINISTRY TO SOLDIERS

The modern Army chaplaincy began to mature during World War I. There were approximately 74 chaplains in the Regular Army and 72 chaplains in the National Guard when the United States entered World War I on 6 April 1917. By the time the Armistice ended World War I the Army had increased its forces from 213, 557 troops to 3,685,458. With the increase in troop numbers the Army chaplains also increased its numbers to 2,217 on active duty.

These Army chaplains made significant contributions in service to their nation during World War I. Out of 2,217 Army chaplains (priests, rabbis and protestants) only 23 died. Three World War I era chaplains symbolize the modern chaplaincy. The roles that each of these

chaplains served represented three critical aspects of today's chaplaincy: the organizer, the trainer, and the field chaplain. The first, Chaplain Charles H. Brent, organized and headed the chaplain office of the American Expeditionary Force (A.E.F.) in France. The second, Chaplain Aldred A. Pruden, is remembered as a trainer. Chaplain Pruden developed the first Army Chaplain School to train new chaplains to serve in an Army environment. Finally, Chaplain Francis P. Duffy was the quintessential Army field chaplain.²⁸

Charles H. Brent, the Episcopal bishop of the Philippines, created the Office of the Chief of Chaplains. Chaplain Brent was considered the most influential Army chaplain in World War I. In January 1918 General John J. Pershing asked Bishop Brent to take charge of the chaplain activities in the American Expeditionary Force (A.E.F.).²⁹

Chaplain Brent made a tremendous impact on General Pershing and his family. General Pershing favored the formation of a chaplain "corps" with Bishop Brent as the senior chaplain. Other chaplains such as Chaplain Edmund Easterbrook and Chaplain Francis Duffy had supported Chaplain Brent in establishing the Office of the Chief of Chaplains.

Chaplain Pruden was an Episcopal priest who graduated from the Theological Seminary of Virginia in 1894 and served as chaplain to the First North Carolina Volunteer Infantry Regiment in the Spanish-American War. He served as one of the six-member board of senior chaplains that met at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, in 1909, to make recommendations to the War Department for a more effective chaplaincy. Pruden also took the lead in persuading the Army to allow chaplains to wear the insignia of rank on their uniform for the first time. His most significant contribution was during World War I when he planned and organized the first Army training school for chaplains. Pruden was also appointed later as the first commandant of the Chaplains' School.³⁰

The most celebrated Army chaplain was Father Francis Patrick Duffy. Father Duffy attended the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C., and then was appointed professor of psychology and ethics as St. Joseph's Seminary in New York. Chaplain Duffy served with distinction during the World War I. He was noted for being the best-known field chaplain.

Chaplain Duffy was always putting himself in harm's way to provide ministry to soldiers in combat. The chain of command could count on Chaplain Duffy to hear their confessions, say mass, visit and counsel soldiers in the field and at the first-aid station. His greatest influence was his 'ministry of presence'. Chaplain Duffy's presence on the battlefield was inspirational. His awards included the Distinguished Service Cross and the Distinguished Service Medal.

These three Army chaplains epitomized the essence of the Army Chaplaincy Corps. The legacy of the accomplishment of these great chaplains paved the way for the modern Army Chaplain.³¹ Its is also important to note that Army chaplains have provided a ministry of presence to soldiers since the Army's beginnings prior to the Revolutionary War. Throughout later years, Army chaplains have provided ministry to refugees, orphans, disaster victims, prisoners of war, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Army chaplains have always provided a ministry of presence in war and peacekeeping operations, but the new challenge ahead is to prepare chaplains to cope with the uncertainty and ambiguity associated with humanitarian relief operations. Chaplains will always be creative and resourceful; but they will be most effective when a training strategy is developed that addresses their role in humanitarian relief operations. A chaplain training strategy must be developed to provide focus and guidance for chaplains ministering to disaster victims.

ARMY CHAPLAINS UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF DOMESTIC SUPPORT OPERATIONS

"A Domestic Support Operation (DSO) is the authorized use of military physical and human resources to support domestic requirements." The Army played a vital role in many disaster relief operations in the late nineteenth century, including the great Chicago Fire, the Johnstown Flood, and the earthquake at Charleston, South Carolina. The chaplain's knowledge and historical awareness of significance events concerning Domestic Support Operations can enhance their ministry.

Several years ago, the President and Congress mandated an expanded role for the military services in federal disaster assistance programs. The Army along with the other services actively participated with federal and state agencies in disaster assistance planning, exercises, and operations in responses to both natural and man-made disasters.

Army chaplains involved in humanitarian relief operations should be familiar with Domestic Support Operations (DSO). The lack of understanding and preparation for Domestic Support Operations will result in less than effective ministry in future operations. Major Command, Continental U.S. Army, Senior Chaplains, and Joint Task Force Chaplains can no longer afford to rely on the initiative, competence and good fortune of subordinate chaplains in DSO. Chaplains must be trained as well as proactive to provide quality ministry to disaster victims involved in humanitarian relief operations. Chaplains can avoid the pitfalls and reduce tensions likely to be encountered in planning, preparing and executing chaplain support in DSO with an understanding of the politico-military roles and responsibilities of the various agencies.

Another important program that chaplains need to be aware of is the Civil-Military Cooperative Action Program. The Defense Authorization Act of 1993 directed the Secretary of Defense to establish a program entitled the Civil-Military Cooperative Action Program, which would use the skills, capabilities, and resources of the Armed Forces to assist civilian efforts to meet domestic needs in the United States.³⁴ The military has been providing this service as a good will gesture to the American communities for years.

The military also provides assistance and support to federal agencies for other civil emergencies. Efforts at the national level focus on providing essential services, aiding public health programs, enforcing federal law, and supporting the ability of the government to function during periods of national crisis.

Domestic Support Operations are initiated in response to major disasters or emergencies. The more severe the disaster, the greater the demand for Department of Defense (DOD) resources over an extended period of time when involved in a natural disaster. Mitigating the consequences of emergencies and major disasters is the shared responsibility of individuals, the private sector, local and state governments, volunteer organizations and federal departments and agencies. Chaplains must have an understanding of these programs and agencies to provide quality ministry to disaster victims.

Finally, understanding the federal response to crisis events is also important. The Stafford Act assumes that the local government will be overwhelmed by the magnitude of the task of responding to preserving lives and property damage. The state governor can request federal assistance if the disaster is beyond the capabilities of the state. The president receives the request from the governor and has the authority to declare the state a federal emergency.³⁵

FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency will be the lead agency during any natural or man-made disaster. A Federal Coordinating Office (FCO) from FEMA will be appointed to coordinate federal assistance. These Federal Coordinating Offices have extensive resources to handle any state emergency.

This is only a cursory sketch of Domestic Support Operations, but it is essential for chaplains to become familiar with some of the agencies and programs that are actively involved in any humanitarian relief operation. For the chaplain, humanitarian relief operations will require unique responses that most chaplains are unprepared and untrained to execute. Much of the credit for successful ministry in Domestic Support Operations in the past belongs to the initiative, competence, and good fortune of the chaplains thrown into this unique situation. The chaplaincy must learn from these experiences and develop a plan to train chaplains to respond more intentionally.

FUTURE ROLES OF THE ARMY CHAPLAINS IN HUMANITARIAN RELIEF OPERATIONS

Traditionally, the chaplain is responsible for advising the command on all matters that pertain to religion, morale, ethics and morals. The Army chaplain provides recommendations as to how the religious ministry supports assets of the command can be most effectively employed. The chaplain advises the command on the role and influence of indigenous religious customs and practices as they effect the command's mission accomplishment. Chaplains also provide ethical decision-making and moral leadership recommendations to the command.

Currently, FM 16-1 states: "The commander provides religious support through a Ministry Team (MT) which consists of at least one chaplain and one chaplain assistant. The MT helps soldiers, families, and authorized civilians exercise their religious beliefs and practices. The MT is central to the organization and functioning of the chaplaincy and organic to units in the Army." Commanders should rely on the chaplain at every level when engaged in humanitarian relief operations.

Army members are called to make ethical and moral decisions when deployed on humanitarian missions. Army chaplains act as the ethical and moral conscience for the command. As a staff officer, the chaplain advises the commander and staff on matters of religion, morals, and morale. This advice includes not only the religious needs of soldiers, but also the moral, ethical, and humanitarian aspects of command policies.³⁷

Humanitarian relief operations have been and will probably continue to be a common mission for U.S. forces. International law under the United Nations Charter provides for humanitarian intervention, which can be justified ethically and morally. The Army chaplaincy should consider itself as an important military resource in providing ministry to disaster victims involved in humanitarian relief operations.

CONCLUSION

The Army chaplaincy is training chaplains to provide religious support during humanitarian relief operations. Chaplains have unique abilities and skills, which can be incorporated into a comprehensive strategy to aid the command in responding to disaster victims. The chaplain training strategy incorporates the Chief of Staff of the Army's vision along with the Chief of Chaplains' vision and philosophy for the training of the Total Army Chaplaincy through 2020.

The Chief of Chaplains highlighted in his monthly newsletter the importance of chaplains training to standard.³⁸ Senior chaplains must echo the importance of this message throughout their command and down to the unit chaplain level.

Army chaplains will be more effective in responding to a humanitarian crisis once receiving training in the unique field of humanitarian relief operations. Units throughout the Army must incorporate the chaplain into their training cycle with humanitarian assistance scenarios to prepare them to cope with issues surrounding humanitarian relief operations.

Civilian and military leaders can expect an increase in deployments of United States military forces to humanitarian relief operations. In order to be persuasive in peace the Army must maintain a readiness posture to deal with disaster relief operation. The Army must utilize the chaplain as a critical member of the team.

The Chief of Chaplains' Office should remind senior leaders to promote the involvement of chaplains in humanitarian relief operations. The Chief of Chaplains should continue to reemphasize to Senior Chaplains (Installation, Corps and Division Chaplains) the importance of training chaplains in humanitarian relief operations. Senior chaplains must convince senior leaders of the importance of funding training for chaplains in preparation for humanitarian relief operations.

The United States believes in the protection of human rights and the promotion of religious freedom, which are two of the highest concerns in our foreign policy. The United States' values are centered on these two important issues. Much effort has been dedicated in establishing humanitarian assistance programs to alleviate human suffering in humanitarian relief operations. Chaplains have an opportunity to work with these humanitarian assistance programs to bring about healing and easing the pain and suffering of disaster victims.

Humanitarian relief operations remain a challenge for the Army and Army chaplains. A training strategy for Army chaplains in humanitarian relief operations will prepare chaplains to provide quality ministry to disaster victims for future deployments.

The word for "crisis" in Chinese has a two-sided meaning. Roughly translated, it means dangerous-opportunity. It is precisely this sense of "dangerous-opportunity" that confronts chaplains involved in humanitarian relief operations. Future missions and deployments in humanitarian relief operations, CONUS or OCONUS, will have its share of risk, uncertainty and ambiguity. Army chaplains must be trained and prepared to meet the challenges ahead while providing quality ministry to the forces participating in humanitarian relief operations.

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